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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000518

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/04/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS U.S. IRAQ POLICY "NAIVE"

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)  
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[11](#). (U) Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso termed U.S. policy toward Iraq "naive" in a speech he gave last Saturday in Kyushu, according to press reports. He reportedly stated that once the initial combat operations were completed "everything went bad." He continued that "after the occupation started its operations, it was extremely naive from the start, and nothing went well." Chief Cabinet Secretary Shiozaki, speaking to the press today, subsequently

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attempted to clarify Aso's remarks, saying that Aso's use of the term "naive" was inappropriate. He continued that what Aso meant to say "was that perhaps the United States can utilize Japan's know-how in peace building", and that Japan's expertise in peace-building through "soft power" to ensure human security and stabilize people's daily lives should be utilized more.

[12](#). (C) COMMENT: Prime Minister Abe has suffered in recent weeks from a public perception that he is weak and indecisive in managing his cabinet. Aso's comments will add to that criticism. It is unclear right now whether Aso's comments along with similar criticisms voiced recently by Defense Minister Kyuma are the remarks of loose cannons or the product of a deliberate effort by the Abe Government to distance itself from the Bush Administration on Iraq.

SCHIEFFER